

West Virginia Writers' Project

RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

8-

Subject Focchontas County history Date May 22, 1941
Research Worker Juanita S. Dilley Date Research Taken May 22
Typist Juanita S. Dilley Date Typed May 22, 1941
Source Focchontas Times, Feb. 8, 1940 Date Filed _____
by Norman H. Price



44

Railroad

Editor Calvin W. Prides recent sound off on the radio from New York brings a letter from Mr. Robert Earle of Meriden, Kansas, with reminiscences of the building of the Greenbrier Railway in 1899. He was a foreman with the J. W. Strong Company the first contractor who arrived in September, 1899; pitched their camp of nine army tents salvaged from the recent Spanish American war, and began operations a mile below Marlinton at the Lee Place on Still House Run (now Stillwell), running into a lot of rattlesnakes and copperheads the first day in the jungle.

There was a fine outfit of big Missouri mules and draft horses to operate the plows and scrapers. This being before the days of steam shovels, and the crew was mainly colored men recruited for the duration of the job in North Carolina and Virginia, who were held in a sort of benevolent subjection until such time as it pleased the management to let them settle with the quartermaster and return whence they came. Incidentally, the bosses and many of the laborers carried guns. (Note- I have always heard it said that men were often shot, but they were just buried and no questions asked.)

Mr. Earle says that so far as he is aware he is the only one now living of strange foremen and bosses, and he is living in retirement from construction work. All of the others seem to have met with some more or less violent ends.

Strong was killed in a runaway accident in New Mexico;

2

Wels Angstrom died in a straight jacket in Cleveland; Dan Foley died in Kansas City; Bob Vanstan was last heard of in Pittsburg in 1920; Mike Golden dropped his gun on the floor down in Oklahoma and it went off and killed him. Mike Calvin was killed in the Philippines. These men are remembered by the older inhabitants hereabouts who worked on the building of the railroad.

The editors brother, who was at that time working on the paper, is a witness to the snake killing referred to by Mr. Earle, and dissected out one of the big ones for his museum of natural history.

S. K. P.

from---Pocahontas Times, Feb. 8, 1940

by Norman E. Price

West Virginia Writers' Project
RESEARCH IDENTIFICATION REPORT

Subject Focshontas County History Date April 14, 1941
Chapter 8 Section 20
Research Worker Juanita S. Dilley Date Research Taken April 9, 10, 11,
Typist Juanita S. Dilley Date Typed April 14, 15, 1941
Source _____ Date Filed _____

* West Virginia Geological Survey-Focshontas County

Court records

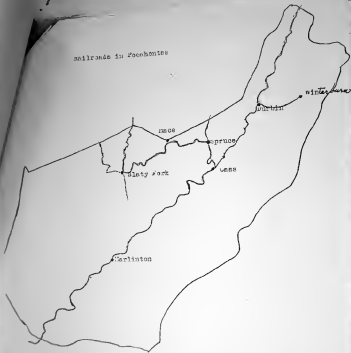
Focshontas since--1918

Mrs. S. F. Saics, Durbin, W. Va.

** History of Focshontas--H. T. Price



railroads in West Virginia



- Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad
- Western Maryland Railroad
- West Virginia Coal and Paper Co. Railroad

THE RAILROAD IN POCAHONTAS COUNTY

11
In December, 1890, Colonel John T. McGraw of Grafton made a visit to this county and purchased the farm known as Marlins bottom for a town site. This purchase of the town site was the first intimation that the county people had of a proposed railway development. The plan was that the Camden System of railroads was to be extended up the Williams river, across the divide at the head of Stony Creek, and to Marlinton. It was a part of the plan that the Chesapeake and Ohio railroad would build an extension from the Hot Springs to Marlinton and connect with the Camden Road at that place.

The town of Marlinton was laid off in town lots in 1891, and widely advertised as a place where a town could be built. The building of a railroad was regarded as a certainty. The Pocahontas Development Company was chartered and took a deed for 640 acres on which the town was to be built. They put valuable improvements on it. An offer of \$5000 to be applied on a new court house was made, if the people of the county would change the county seat from Huntersville to Marlinton. The election held in the fall of 1891 gave the county seat to Marlinton, which at that time had a population of one hundred people.

The railroad was not built at that time because of a money panic which came to the county. Colonel McGraw who had invested largely in lands at Warbin and elsewhere in the county never seemed to try to interest capitalists in this county nor to try to develop it with a railroad.

his attention was called to the natural grade for a railroad up Greenbrier River, so he had a survey made from Monocvert to Marlinton at a cost of \$10,000. and it was on this location that the railroad was afterwards built.

The Greenbrier Division of the Chesapeake and Ohio railway was begun in 1899. It is a branch of the main line at Whitcomb, Greenbrier County, and extends northward across this county into Pocahontas county, following the Greenbrier River to its northern termination at Winterburn Station (Therwood P. O.) At Durbin it connects with the Western Maryland Railway. It was completed to Marlinton in 1900. The arrival of the first train to that place in that same year was made a public ceremony. Some thousands gathered here and barbecued beef and had a celebration. That night when they returned to Monocvert, they told that when the train got to Marlinton that the great crowd gathered around the locomotive and that ^{when} the engineer requested them to give him room to turn around they cleared a space of some acres. This of course was only a localized anecdote.

* * The track was completed to Cass in 1901, to Durbin in 1902, and to Winterburn in 1906. The completion of this railroad marked a new era in the prosperity of Pocahontas county, and has continued to be one of the most valuable assets in the county.

In reply to an inquiry regarding its construction, first operation, and track mileage, the late W. B. Well, Vice-President, supplies the following summary:

"The construction of the branch began in June, 1899, and was completed in June, 1906. The date of the first operation of trains over the Greenbrier Branch in Pocahontas county was in 1900. The mileage of this branch in Pocahontas county, W. Va. is, main line, 65.5 miles, with 12.73 miles of sidings."

In 1905 from a report by the Secretary of State on the assessed valuation of railroad property in West Virginia the Greenbrier branch of the C. and O. railroad in Pocahontas county was given as follows: Pocahontas county-- 62.95 miles main line at a value of \$3,630. per mile, making a total value of main line of \$228,508.50. Length of siding-- 9.37 miles at a value of \$1,650. per mile. Total of sidings \$15,460.50. Total value of tools and machinery, \$440.00 value of buildings and real estate \$4,620.00 telegraph line-- 64 miles at a total value of \$2,240.00 grand total of all taxable property--\$320,814.00

in five years, 1900 to 1906. Focahontas County changed from being one of the few counties in the state without a railroad to the county having the greatest railroad mileage in the state. The county began to develop at once. From 1900 to 1910 Focahontas had an increase in population of 72% which was largely due to the construction of the railroad. "Lumber towns" sprang up all along the route and booming days for the county began. Marlinton changed from a town of 171 people to one with 1,045 by 1910 and to 1,117 in 1920. The Greenbrier Tannery of the Union Tanning Company of New York was built at Marlinton in 1901, and employed around 150 men. The Focahontas Tannery at Frank was built soon after the completion of the railroad to that place. The farmers now had a way to get their cattle, sheep, poultry and other farm products to market without driving the overland to another state. It was no longer necessary to go to Millboro and other railroad centers out of the county and haul in goods by wagon train. Since there were four passenger trains per day up and down the Greenbrier River much of the travel to and from Marlinton the county seat and other points on the railroad was by train until the coming of the automobile and good roads made it more convenient to travel by automobile.

At the present there is the one passenger ^{train} up from Monacaert in the forenoon and back down in the afternoon. It has a gasoline engine instead of steam. The freight goes up one day and back down the next.

The stations and postoffices are as follows:

Entering Focahontas on Deep Mountain 34.8 miles from Monacaert.
 The first stop is
 Beard----- 41.3 miles from Monacaert
 Beahart----- 48.6 " " "

Watoga----- 50.0 miles from Hancock

Buckeye----- 54.0 " " "

Marlington----- 58.9 " " "

clover Lick-----73.9 " " "

Sittington-----79.7 " " "

Cass----- 83.5 " " "

Hosterman----- 90.9 " " "

Boyer (Nottingham P.O.)

Durbin-----98.4 " " "

Hartow----- 100.9 " " "

Winterburn(Thornwood P. O.) 103.7 miles from Hancock

Other post offices in the county but situated on star or
rural free delivery routes are:

Boyer,	Burr,	Elray,	Frost,
Green Bank,	Hillsboro,	Jacob,	Mantelville,
Linwood,	Lobelia,	Mace,	Mill Point,
Onoto,	Platy Fork,	Spice,	Winnsboro Springs,
Woodrow,			

railroads

western Maryland railroad--Spruce Branch

this branch of the railroad was built by the Greenbrier, Cheat and Elk Railroad Company in 1911. their certificate of incorporation as found in deed book 46 page 288 is as follows.

" September 27, 1910. the railroad which this corporation proposes to build will commence at or near Senie in Randolph County on the Shavers Fork of Cheat River thence by the most practicable route by way of the valley of Shavers Fork of Cheat River into Roanoke County to the waters of Big Spring Branch of Elk River and by way of the valley of Elk to some point near Webster Springs in Webster County; with a branch up the Old field Fork of Elk River to some point on the Marlinton and Camden railroad in Roanoke County; with a branch line from that point at or near the mouth of Dirty Fork and up Blaty Fork Creek to a point on the C and O Railroad at Clover Lick; and with a branch line from some point at or near the mouth of Valley Fork of Elk River in Randolph County. The principal business office to be at least.

the capital stock was \$50,000 divided into shares of \$100. each. the shareholders were:

W. A. Slaymaker-----	New York City-----	10 shares
Henry L. Condit-----	"-----	10 shares
John W. Luke-----	New York City-----	10 shares
George M. Perkins--	New York City-----	10 shares
George A. Salmon----	New York City-----	10 shares

WESTERN MARYLAND RAILROAD IN POCAHONTAS

Durbin branch

* The Durbin branch of the Western Maryland Railway extends from Elkins in Randolph County, to Durbin and there connects with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad-Greenbrier Division. According to J. W. Brooks, Superintendent, this branch was completed by the Coal and Iron Railway Company on August 1, 1903, and was purchased by the present owners on November 1, 1905. In Pocahontas County there are 17.62 miles of main track with 2.01 miles of sidings."

Spruce Branch

* During 1928 the Western Maryland railway company purchased that portion of the Greenbrier, Cheat and Elk railroad beginning at Cheat Junction in Randolph county, and extending south along Shavers Fork to Spruce, where it turns west, crossing through the mountain passes between the headwaters of Hygart, Cheat and Elk rivers, and then down Big Spring fork of Elk river to the village of Blatz Fork. From this point it extends northwestward down main Elk river, and passes into Randolph county at the mouth of Douglas Fork. This railroad is entirely of standard gauge, the principal function of which in previous years was a log carrier for the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. This railroad will provide a general freight and passenger service in this territory, which also includes extensive coal deposits of eastern Cabeter, southern Randolph and northwestern Pocahontas counties."

from "A Geological Survey- Paul Price-1929

Durbin Branch

when the coal and iron railroad reached what is now west Durbin and the Chesapeake and Ohio what is now Durbin, both had their surveys through what is called the narrows just above Durbin. Both roads were anxious to lay steel through the gap, but the U. and O rushed a crew in one Saturday night in October 1902. Sunday saw intense activities and when evening came a flat car loaded with ties stood at the end of the steel, what is where the switch is located going into the Pouchonten Tanning Company siding at Frank, so the U and O got ahead of the coal and iron. They later extended their line to Winterburn. Both companies had been anxious to build into this section so as to open up the vast timber sections.

The Durbin branch of the Western Maryland railroad of 17.62 miles extending from Durbin to the divide into Randolph County extended through one of the richest timber sections of the county. Lumber Companies came into this section as soon as the railroad was completed and the lumber towns of Wildell, Gertrude, May, Brancher, Madeline, Olive and Burner sprang up and flourished for about fifteen years. The land rose in value until it was worth something like \$5,000,000 for the timber alone, and now that the timber has been cut it is held at something like \$5.00 an acre for grazing. The coal and iron, what a vision of wealth and prosperity that name once conjured. But now the land has been tripped of its timber and the region now looks stern and wild and naked. At least seven post offices were allowed to ^(Mail of Thomas) exist and all of the churches were discontinued, and only one school, the Wildell school, was retained. Most of the land is now a part of the Monongahela National Forest.



No. : 1675

Source :

W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : August 7, 1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co.

Log loader & log cars in woods



No. : 1778

Source : Bert Waugh

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

Log cars, location & company unknown

~~Alton~~

WUPP



No. : 1867

Source : Westvaco

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

(copy)

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

Log landing, loader, & log train



No. : 1875

Source : Westvaco

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

(Copy)

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

Log camp, landing, loader, & flat cars

No. : 2039

Source : W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : November 10, 1945

Subject :

Mower Lumber Company

Sky #4 & loader in the woods





No. : 1457

Source : Mrs Amos Lytton

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 12



1457

No. : 1553

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : c. 1918-1919

Subject :

West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company
Shay #8 at Spruce coal dock

L-R: Robert Dean, engineer, ? , ? ,
Griffin, ?



No. : 1555

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : 1920

Subject :

West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company
Shay #10 at Slate Fork Tank

Second from left: Pat Bradley



No. : 1663

Source : W. Va. University

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

(copy)

Date : 8/7/1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Company, camp
buildings and loaded log cars



1663

No: 1665-

Source: W Va. Collection
W Va. U. Library

Society

file

albums

Print located in:

Date: August 7, 1946

Subject:

Mower Lumber Co

Shed in woods on new track



No. : 1666

Source :

W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : November 10, 1945

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co.

Shay No 4 & loader at a log dump



No. : 1670

Source : W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : August 7, 1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co

View along new track in the woods



No. : 1671

Source :

W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : August 7, 1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co

View in woods of a new log
landing

No. : 931

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shays No. 1, 2, &
at Spruce Shop



No. : 932

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

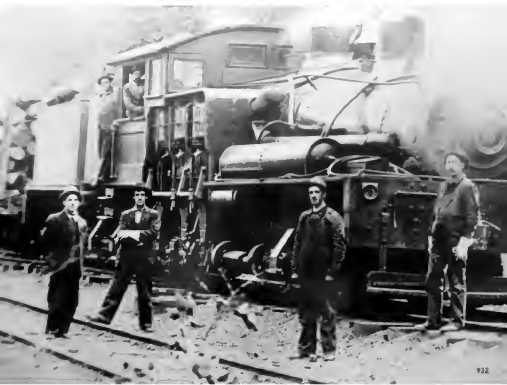
albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 5



No. : 933

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 1 (F)
at Spruce shop

This photo is a portion of No. 931



No. : 982

Source : Jack Ryder

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No 5
Photo taken at Spruce coating dock



No. : 983

Source : Jack Ryder

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : About 1913

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 10

Left-right: Bobby Dean, engineer, Joe Victor,
fireman, Ward Blanningham, conductor, ?



No. : 1071

Source : Austin Sharp

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp and Paper Co Shay No 2
near camp 17





113

No. : 1428

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co Shay
No 7



No. : 1436

Source : D. Earl Guard

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co. Shay
No 3 with log train



No : 928

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 14

2 file cards



No. : 929

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 6



No. : 930

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 3



No. : 1675

Source :

W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

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Society

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Subject :

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1778



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source

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Log landing, loader, & log train



No. : 1875

Source : Westvaco

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source

Society

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(copy)

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Subject :

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1663

No: 1665

Source: W Va. Collection
W Va. H. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date: August 7, 1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co

Shed in woods on new track



No. : 1666

Source :

W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : November 10, 1945

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co.

Shay No 4 & loader at a log dump



No. : 1670

Source : W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : August 7, 1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co

View along new track in the woods



No. : 1671

Source :

W. Va. Collection
W. Va. U. Library

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

file

Date : August 7, 1946

Subject :

Mower Lumber Co

View in woods of a new log
landing





No. : 932

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

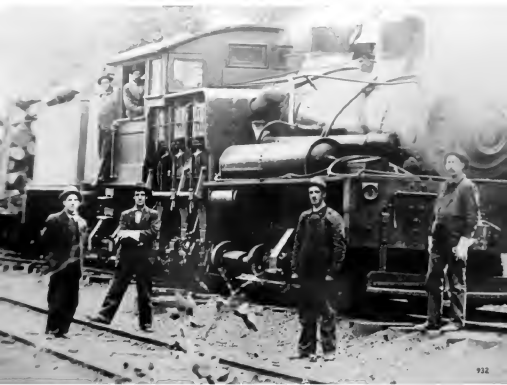
albums

file

Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 5



No. : 933

Source : Kyle Neighbors

Original in the possession of :

source

Society

Print located in :

albums

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Date :

Subject :

W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 1 (F)
at Spruce shop

This photo is a portion of No. 931



No. : 982

Source : Jack Ryder

Original in the possession of :

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Society

Print located in :

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W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No 5
Photo taken at Spruce coating dock



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Source : Austin Sharp

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W. Va. Pulp and Paper Co Shay No 2
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Society

Print located in :

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Date :

Subject :

West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co Shay
No 7



No. : 1436

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Society

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West Virginia Pulp & Paper Co. Shay
No 3 with log train





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Date :

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W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shay No. 14

2 file cards



No. : 929

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Original in the possession of :

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W. Va. Pulp & Paper Co Shays No. 1, 2, &
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West Virginia Writers' Project
RESEARCH INVESTIGATION REPORT

Subject Countryside And Industry. Date July, 12, 1941
Research Worker Samuel O. Smith Date Research Taken 7/7, 8, 9, 10, 11/41
Typist Samuel O. Smith Date Typed 7/11, 12/41
Source A. H. McNeill Beckscye, W. Va. Date Filed _____
Addie B. Graham. " "
J. O. Morrison, Marlinton. "
Bella F. Yeager, Hillsboro. "



COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY. SAMUEL G. SMITH HILLSBORO, W. VA. POCAHONTAS CO.

Pocahontas County has several chain and company stores, the West Virginia Pulp And Paper Company at Cass, have a large general store that was established about 1900, Durbin Mercantile at Durbin and Bartow Supply at Bartow all company stores. At Marlinton you find an A. & P. store and one owned by O. J. Casdoff of Roncovert who has a chain of stores besides the one in Marlinton they have one at Hillsboro competing with home owned stores owned by R. D. Moore proprietor of Hillsboro Out Price Store, formerly owned by M. I. Inbell. And another general store owned by W. T. Walker, these stores all handle country produce, that represents the surplus of what the farmers produce in Pocahontas County.

Hillsboro has one hotel operated by R. W. Rogers which has a splendid trade as many motorists prefer a small town to the larger one on account of noise, J. W. Siple and W. O. McClune operated hotels in Hillsboro until a few years back when Siple was destroyed by fire and McClune closed due to advanced age and sickness in the family.

At Durbin you find Hotel Wilmoth, at Marlinton, Motel Marlin, Sevel Stations Hotel, Clarke Home Hotel, Grimes Hotel that was formerly known as Spitzer Hotel. Pocahontas County has many tourist homes at Hillsboro you find one operated by Mrs. R. T. Beard, At Millpoint Cliffside Tourists, at the Wallaces and operated by Cera Cloonan, at Marlinton we find two one by Mrs. Jack Richardson

Commerce & Industry. S.S.S. Pocatello Co.

was operated by Mr. S.J. Rexrode, and many more throughout the county
the cart of the traveling trade during the summer months. In the early days
when we had the horse drawn vehicles, and all stock were driven to market many
farmers that had large houses accommodated the traveling public and one of the
stopping places worthy of mention was at the farm home of the late Joseph Smith
above Millpoint, who took care of many people and their horses and was known
as the home of love, hospitality and prayer by the traveling public. This was
in the days of the livery stable and inn, at Hillsboro, T.J. Smith had a
back route from Hillsboro to Seibert. At Marlinton was a livery stable with
saddle horses and buggy-horses which were hired out for trips all over the
county the first was operated by the Englishman by the name of Wilson his sta-
ble man was Tom Courtney, and from information available he was followed by
Anthony Kincaid about 1900 his drivers were his sons Jack and Rex following
Kincaid, came the Marlinton Feed and Livery Co. In which were the following men
Sawyers, Dillon, and our own native son the late W.A. McLaughlin of Marlinton.
J. S. Smith Sr. ran a livery stable until the days of the automobile which was
about 1910. The late John D. Gay and Walter Mann operated a feed store and liv-
ery barn for a time. ~~Not~~ Not long after the automobile was introduced in the
county the livery stable along with the horses passed out of the picture, the
car has been the means of transportation for about 30 years but the aeroplane is
gaining popularity and about 1935 ground was obtained from D.W. Williams on the

West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company
Lumber Railroad--Pocahontas County

* "Certain portions of what was formerly the Greenbrier, West and Elk Railroad was not included in the Western Maryland purchase and are now operated by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company. This includes a branch from Slaty Fork extending around the eastern side of Gauley Mountain and entering Randolph County near the northern prong of Big Run, and another branch from Spruce southeastward across Back Allegheny Mountain, through a mountain pass 3,940 feet above sea level, down Leatherbark Run, to Cass where it connects with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. According to Charles W. Luke, manager of the Company operations at Cass, the branch extending from Slaty Fork to Randolph County on Gauley Mountain will be taken up after the timber has been removed from that area, but the branch connecting the Chesapeake and Ohio at Cass with the Western Maryland at Spruce will in the future be operated by the Lumber Company as a private railroad."

* From West Va. Geological Survey-F. Price
1929